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World Summit for Social Development, including the role of the
United Nations system in promoting social development

Statement submitted by the International Co-operative Alliance,
a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the
Economic and Social Council, category I

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is
circulated in accordance with paragraphs 23 and 24 of Economic and Social
Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

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STATEMENT REGARDING THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), one of the oldest non-governmental organizations with category I consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, is the representative of national cooperative organizations in over 90 countries, which in turn have approximately 700 million individual members.

The ICA and its members welcome the decision to convene the World Summit for Social Development and the attention given to it by the Economic and Social Council. The cooperative movement intends to take an active role in the preparatory process.

The ICA particularly welcomes the focus on the three core issues established for the Summit - social integration, poverty reduction and employment expansion. All participants in the Summit process should address the best ways and means of attaining these objectives.

One strategy which should receive attention is the strengthening of people's organizations in all countries. The 1993 UNDP Human Development Report identified very clearly the benefits which accrue when development is not only for the people but also by the people. Cooperatives, as locally controlled membership organizations, are one of the best (although by no means the only) structures to promote effective people's participation.

The March 1993 ILO experts' meeting on cooperatives reached similar conclusions. It encouraged Governments to support but to refrain from unduly controlling national cooperative movements. It also noted the important role of worker-owned cooperatives in creating productive employment, often in difficult conditions. Cooperatives are essentially designed to provide needed economic and social services for their members, which makes them a useful vehicle for empowerment of people with limited resources. They are not, however, a tool for the implementation of national social programmes. To be successful, they must be established on the initiative of their members.

The advantages of cooperative development are now increasingly recognized. The United Nations, ILO and FAO collaborate with four non-governmental organizations, including the ICA, in the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Co-operatives (COPAC). It is significant that the focal point for cooperatives within the United Nations has historically been the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

As institutions around the world prepare their strategies to attain the objectives of the World Summit, attention should be placed on the strengthening of cooperatives as one means of creating the self-help structures that are necessary for effective people's participation in their own development.



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COORDINATION OF THE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALIZED
AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM RELATED
TO THE FOLLOWING THEMES:

- (a) COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE: EMERGENCY RELIEF
AND THE CONTINUUM TO REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT;

Statement submitted by the International Federation of Red
Cross and Red Crescent Societies** a non-governmental
organization in consultative status with the Economic and
Social Council, category I

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is
circulated in accordance with paragraphs 23 and 24 of Economic and Social
Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

* * *

* E/1993/100.

** Formerly known as League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Disasters, Vulnerability And Human Rights.

Disasters and vulnerability

The Loma Prieta earthquake that struck California in 1989 was of almost exactly the same strength as that which struck Erzincan in Turkey in 1992. Both hit densely-populated areas. In Turkey, 547 died and more than 100,000 were made homeless, while 65 people were killed in California.

Clearly, there is often very little that can be done to prevent drought, floods, hurricanes or earthquakes, but we can all, from governments, aid agencies and communities to families and individuals, mitigate their effects.

Epidemics are among the most preventable disasters. Sanitation and safe drinking water have a dramatic impact on water-borne disease. Surveillance monitors the health of individuals and communities, alerting them to risks. Mass immunisation not only reduces vulnerability when other disease pre-conditions exist, but it helped eradicate smallpox, for example, which caused devastating epidemics throughout history until it was finally eliminated in 1977.

Preventing disasters requires actions which reduce people's vulnerabilities to natural events and diminish the effects of those events. Such actions require the political will and economic means to make them work. In many disaster-prone countries, the poor and the vulnerable who are potential disaster victims exercise little political power, and thus have less possibility to claim fundamental human rights, or to persuade governments to invest in their future.

Research into successful famine mitigation shows that famines are most effectively tackled by countries with democratic institutions, from a free press to open political systems, which lead to the creation of safety nets for the most vulnerable, land reforms and literacy to reduce future vulnerability, and enhance their human rights and dignity.

Although there is very little that can be done to prevent extreme natural events, there is a great deal that can be done to reduce their effects and to render people less vulnerable.

As a first step in this process aid agencies must confront the basic causes of vulnerability.

Identifying vulnerabilities

We all know that some people are more likely to be affected by a hazard than others even though they are exposed to the same event. Even where a whole community lives in an earthquake zone or is threatened by a health hazard such as cholera, certain groups will be at a higher risk than others.

There are three basic characteristics that make some groups more vulnerable than others. These are:

- > **Proximity/Exposure:** People who live or work near some kind of hazard are more vulnerable than those who don't (E.g. on a flood plain, near a nuclear reactor, etc.). Certain people are more exposed to AIDS than others (E.g.: in certain parts of the world, people without access to information or protection, people who cannot control their sexual partners, etc.).
- > **Poverty:** People who have few options, few resources and few reserves can be pushed over the "edge" of survival more easily than those who are wealthier. Poverty is linked to other resources such as education. Children of poor families are far less likely to enter and complete school than children of families who are better off. Where education provides a reserve or opens options for economic activity, poor people will often be disadvantaged.
- > **Exclusion/Marginalization:** People who are left out of economic and social systems are vulnerable. For example, people who are excluded from access to education, health care, employment, housing, credit, political participation, etc. are not able to manage and control their lives and the decisions and events that affect them as much as those who do have access to all of these resources. People are excluded and marginalised for a number of reasons. For example, prejudice and discrimination against people of a certain class, ethnic group, religion, race or other group effectively marginalises them and makes them vulnerable. In some societies people who have physical or mental handicaps are effectively excluded from many economic and social functions. Sometimes, social custom and roles - result in exclusion or marginalisation of certain groups such as women and children who may, in some societies, have limited access to resources and opportunities.

These examples point out not only who might be vulnerable but also why they are vulnerable. There is, sometimes, a tendency among the humanitarian organisations to address only the question of who in their programme design by referring to generic groups of people as *the most vulnerable* such as women, children, the elderly, the poor or the marginalised. This focus only on who are vulnerable can lead to inappropriate responses. Evacuating women and children separately after earthquakes, floods or wars often result in psychological and social problems. Providing only for the refugees where the host communities also lack similar services creates

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additional treats for the target groups. Moving the poor to safer areas can reduce one form of risk but by limiting their access to income sources often controlled by the rich, more serious risks may arise. All disaster response programmes need to address the question why as well as who is vulnerable.

Often what manifests as vulnerability at a particular time, such as to disasters, is a symptom of much more deep rooted causes, such as lack of access to resources (economic/material vulnerability), disintegration of social patterns (social vulnerability), degradation of the environment and inability to protect it (ecological vulnerability), lack of strong national and local institutional structures (organisational vulnerability), lack of access to information and knowledge (educational vulnerability), lack of public awareness (attitudinal/motivational vulnerability) limited access to political power and representation (political vulnerability), certain beliefs and customs (cultural vulnerability).

Disasters and human rights

The increasing complexity of disasters and the blurring of the distinction between man-made and natural disasters forces should focus attention on the prime causes of vulnerability to disaster. Be it famines or earthquakes, Africa or Europe, there is a close correlation between disaster vulnerability and people's ability to claim their basic human rights.

Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims the right to life, liberty and the security of person.

Article 25 states that we all have the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of ourselves and our family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond our control.

What is at issue is not whether governments are promoting these rights, but whether people and communities are able to claim them effectively, and have a realistic expectation that their government will be able to turn that claim into action.

Shanty town dwellers are vulnerable to epidemics because of the poor environment in which they are forced to live and their lack of access to health services. Farmers caught up in the complex disaster of civil war, economic dislocation and famine are vulnerable because they cannot claim their right to "liberty and the security of person". Landless labourers living on the flood plain of Bangladesh are

unable to claim their right to a "standard of living adequate for health and well-being". When disaster hits, their location puts them more at risk of dying. If they survive, their lack of ability to claim their human rights means they have less capacity to recover from the disaster and hence are more vulnerable to the effects of the next round of flooding.

The essence of reducing disaster vulnerability and responding effectively in disaster relief lies in the effective implementation of human rights. Disasters seek out those least able to claim their basic rights. The process is pernicious since disaster vulnerability further reduces the practice of basic human rights.

The implementation of human rights is also a key issue in disaster relief and rehabilitation.

In disaster relief, the Federation believes that the fundamental concern of mankind and of the international community should be the protection and welfare of the individual and the safeguarding of basic human rights.

If there is a duty to bring relief to all disaster victims, regardless of nationality, race, religion, social position or political opinion, then receiving aid without discrimination, and based on needs alone, is a fundamental human right. Aid agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, play a key role in ensuring that these rights are exercised.

Just as government voluntarily accept obligations to protect the victims of armed conflicts, so they should accept obligations towards victims of disasters. It is also incumbent upon the aid agencies, both national and international, to assist disaster victims in claiming their right to receive assistance speedily, recognising that the duty to expedite international relief rests firstly with the affected government.

In India today, famine victims possess the "social capacity" of the right to claim government famine relief. It is this ability to claim relief which has largely eliminated mass starvation from the famine process in India. Famine relief systems in other countries, particularly in Africa, need to take a critical look at the ability of victims to make claims upon their government in times of stress. As modern governments replace local political structures and impose taxes and national agricultural policies, they often, by default, destroy the local system of claims that formerly acted as a support in times of stress. Famine relief policies should encourage the modern state to take a critical look at its obligations to the vulnerable in such times.

If we extend this thinking from disaster relief back into disaster prevention and preparedness, then

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prevention becomes more than a civil engineering exercise and preparedness has to go beyond the stockpiling of relief goods.

The vast majority of disaster victims are poor. The vast majority have little access to adequate health care or clean water. Most have little say in their country's political life and receive little benefit from its development schemes.

Disaster prevention programmes, like development programmes, have to recognise the root causes of poverty.

Identifying capacities to cope with threats and reduce vulnerabilities

In recognising and addressing the root causes of vulnerability, aid agencies must learn to build upon the innate capacities of local people and communities.

For many communities, mitigation of everyday risks is a permanent activity and an integral part of their survival strategy. In some situations there is perhaps more space for adjustment or adaptation to hazards and their impacts than we recognise. It is this fine balance between vulnerabilities and capacities which ultimately defines who is at more risk and who tips over the edge when the disaster strikes. In many ways vulnerabilities and capacities are mirror images of each other. A certain weakness can be turned into a strength through programmes and activities aimed at enhancing capacities at all levels: the individual, the household, the community.

Capacities can be divided into three classes:

- **Economic /Material:** People with economic and material resources can survive better. These may come in the form of land, tools, food, jobs, energy sources or access to credit and borrowing capacity. The abundance and appropriateness of people's resources makes a big difference in whether they can handle and control any kind of threat. For example, people with access to food and clean water have better health to withstand disease; those with the means can afford materials to make their homes strong against cyclones.
- **Social/Organizational:** People have other resources that help them cope with, resist and handle the threats they may face. For example, communities that are close-knit and have social networks to support each other, where good leadership, caring local and national institutions are in place, where people share the physical resources they have in times of need. These

communities may be economically poor but still they can be strong. Social and organisational capacities can be just as important (and sometimes more important) as material or economic capacities in helping people achieve development.

- **Attitudinal/Motivational/Psychological:** People also have capacities in terms of the ways they feel about their ability to cope. When people are dependent on others and feel victimised by events outside their control, they have few attitudinal or psychological capacities. They are more vulnerable to threats. When they feel strong, capable and powerful, they are less vulnerable. Sometimes, people gain motivational capacities through positive experiences of organising for some goal and working effectively to achieve it. High levels of awareness of risks can change attitudes towards safety. Thus, these capacities are often closely related to the capacities in the social/organizational realm.

Conclusion

Today, with our understanding of the causes of disaster vulnerability and their close relation to the issue of basic human rights, we have no excuse for treating only the symptoms and effects of disaster. Disaster response agencies have to start addressing such issues as why people are forced to live in high-risk areas such as Bangladesh's low-lying delta front, and why it is that some families or communities are consistently unable to obtain equitable access to government services. And in addressing these issues they have to learn how to provide aid which builds upon local people's capacities rather than creating further vulnerability through dependence upon external aid.

[A fuller analysis of vulnerability and disaster response can be found in the new Federation publication, the World Disasters Report. This analytical reference text will be published each year by the Federation and is available through most book sellers.

The World Disasters Report, 1993.

The Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Statement submitted by the International Federation of Associations
of the Elderly (FIAPA), a non-governmental organization in
consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category I

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is
circulated in accordance with paragraphs 23 and 24 of Economic and Social
Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

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* E/1993/100.

INTEGRATION OF THE ELDERLY INTO SOCIETY: THEIR ROLE AND
THEIR PLACE IN URBAN LIFE

FIAPA was established in 1980 by associations of the elderly in four European countries, and today it unites associations established in 39 countries on five continents. According to a recent monograph issued by member associations, FIAPA brings together more than 100 million elderly people.

FIAPA has four objectives:

(a) Ensuring representation of the elderly internationally. On the world level, FIAPA has been granted category I consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. On the European level, FIAPA is one of four members of the consultative body established under the aegis of the Commission of the European Economic Community (EEC). Moreover, the Federation also has consultative status with UNESCO and the Council of Europe. The geographical scope of FIAPA reflects the extraordinary progress of efforts to organize the world's elderly in associations; it has earned FIAPA a hearing at the United Nations, as shown by the recent communications FIAPA received in 1990 from Javier Pérez de Cuéllar and in 1992 from Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali;

(b) Organizing international meetings of elderly people to promote exchanges. Each year, FIAPA organizes an international colloquium bringing together 1,000-1,800 participants from 30 countries. The last colloquium was held in Barcelona in October 1992 and addressed the topic "Cooperation between local authorities and associations to enable the elderly to participate in urban life";

(c) Conducting studies and public opinion research to generate concrete proposals. The most recent public opinion survey carried out by FIAPA in 1992 concerned the topic "The concerns and aspirations of the elderly". The results of that investigation were published in the United Nations Bulletin on Ageing. In order to incorporate the findings of the public opinion survey, FIAPA produced, in collaboration with the United Nations and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA), Vienna, the following three action reports:

- (i) "Objectives and modalities for cooperation between local authorities and seniors' associations to enable senior citizens to continue to participate in urban life";
- (ii) "Health education campaign for the elderly";
- (iii) "The elderly person: the family and inter-generational ties";

(d) Mobilizing the elderly and organizing them in associations to achieve true integration into society. It is to this last mission that FIAPA attaches the greatest importance, especially in view of the organization by the United Nations of the *International Conference on Human Rights* from 14 to 25 June 1993 in Vienna which has as its objective, not only to review progress made in the area of human rights, but also to identify obstacles and to consider new

problems in order to discover ways and means to make further progress in the future.

In the opinion of FIAPA, the ongoing debate regarding human rights should be based on the realities of life.

The first reality is that, according to the above-mentioned 1992 public opinion survey, the elderly's dearest wish is to remain integrated in society and to participate in urban life by playing a volunteer role, performing stimulating work that is also of practical benefit to others.

In a growing number of countries, the elderly are getting together, largely through associations or clubs, in a movement calculated to realize that aspiration, since they feel that they are not receiving the necessary support.

The second reality is that in a number of countries local public authorities, such as regional administrations and mayors, are cutting through this indifference and have put in place mechanisms for cooperation with the movement to organize the elderly in order to enable them to participate in urban life.

Representatives of small localities provided evidence of this cooperation during the above-mentioned ninth international colloquium, which was organized by FIAPA in Barcelona in October 1992.

The third reality is the result of the economic, social and demographic changes which have been observed in numerous countries over the last few years.

A longer period of education and difficulty in finding first-time employment account for the extension of the first stage of life. Later entry into the working world and earlier termination of the working life are shortening the second stage. Lastly, taking retirement at a younger age and especially greater longevity account for a prolongation of the third stage of life.

The three stages of life, namely youth, the working years and old age are tending to become more equal in length. Moreover, in future years the number of people in the third stage, in other words, the elderly, will continue to grow. For example, in France today, one Frenchman in five is older than 60, while in the year 2050 one in three will be older than 60.

That is why there are more and more elderly people of an entirely new type: younger in years or in attitude, in better health, more accessible, more open and more willing to invest their time in the life of their community.

It is the irony of the age that we entrust our national destiny to leaders who are often very old and we admire the genius of captains of industry who are relatively elderly, yet we discount the experience of the elderly in solving the problems of everyday urban life.

It is absurd to underestimate the wealth of experience acquired by the elderly and to neglect the potential accessibility of today's and tomorrow's elderly population.

It is imperative to strengthen the elderly person's civil rights and freedoms to participate in decisions concerning the life of the community in which he or she lives.

However, it is also necessary to permit the elderly to assume their responsibilities by enabling them to voluntarily give of their experience and abilities in service to others: providing information from the collective memory, advice, support, mutual assistance and solidarity. In this way, they can re-establish the dignity of the elderly, which depends upon their having a real role to play in urban life and performing duties as well as enjoying rights.

There is a pressing need to update the outmoded picture of the elderly person. For that reason, it would be unwise to highlight the elderly and their specific problems, since giving so much attention to them might have the effect of excluding them. On the contrary, what is needed is to take into consideration the role of the elderly as participants, in order for them to remain integrated in society.

In order to avoid discrimination based on age, a new concept of age needs to be promoted that would create understanding, solidarity and harmony between the generations and respect of all for the oneness of life.



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WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE ROLE OF
THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM IN PROMOTING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Statement submitted by the International Confederation of
Free Trade Unions, a non-governmental organization in
consultative status with the Economic and Social Council,
category I

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is
circulated in accordance with paragraphs 23 and 24 of Economic and Social
Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

* E/1993/100.

STATEMENT REGARDING THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), representing 113 million trade unionists organized in 164 democratic and independent trade union organizations in 117 countries throughout the world, is pleased to have this opportunity to present to the Economic and Social Council its major concerns with regard to the World Summit for Social Development and the role of the United Nations system in promoting social development.

The ICFTU has welcomed the convening of the World Summit as evidence of the commitment of the General Assembly to place social development firmly at the top of the United Nations agenda. In the process of substantial reform that it has undertaken, and the major peacemaking and peace-keeping initiatives in which it is involved in different parts of the world, it is of the utmost importance that the United Nations social mandate is maintained and intensified. Civil conflict generally has its roots in social deprivation and denial of social justice. By acting firmly and effectively to address such issues the United Nations will be adding a vital dimension to its overall strategy of preventive diplomacy.

For these reasons, the ICFTU believes that the General Assembly has chosen wisely in designating the enhancement of social integration, reduction and alleviation of poverty, and the expansion of productive employment as the Summit's three core issues. Clearly the three are closely interrelated. Mass unemployment and underemployment stand as the principal causes of the poverty that continues to afflict an alarmingly large, and growing, proportion of the world's population. Likewise, it is the key factor in the phenomenon of marginalization that increasingly fragments and disfigures societies with the result that millions are excluded from access to the benefits that social and economic development brings to the rest of the population. Nevertheless, it has also to be recognized that the degradation of employment conditions can also mean that the phenomena of poverty and marginalization affect those who have work.

It is particularly striking, if not surprising, that these core issues fall squarely within the mandate of the International Labour Organisation, which has specific and fundamental responsibilities for social and labour questions within the United Nations system. The ICFTU believes that this circumstance has two principal consequences for the preparation and conduct of the World Summit.

First, it is most important that the Summit secretariat make the fullest use of the expertise and unique perspective of the ILO and involve it accordingly in all aspects of its work. The ILO Director-General has clearly indicated the readiness of his organization to detach a staff member to the secretariat in order to facilitate this type of cooperation, and that the necessary resources will be made available at headquarters to ensure the substantive input expected of the ILO.

Moreover, the ILO Governing Body has already set up a tripartite working party to monitor the preparation of the Summit and to provide the necessary guidance for the ILO contribution.

Secondly, the successive processes of preparation, conduct and follow-up of the Summit need to embody fully the principles of tripartism upon which the ILO is based. This is very much more than a point of organizational or institutional detail. There has been increasing recognition in recent years of the fact that effective democracy and good governance are necessary, if not sufficient, conditions for successful and sustained social development. Likewise, there has been growing acceptance that effective democracy implies, in addition to periodic elections, mechanisms for popular participation.

Trade unions provide generally unparalleled representative mechanisms for this type of participation, and along with employers' organizations they need to be integrated into social and economic policy-making within the framework of appropriate tripartite institutions. Indeed the widespread tendency to exclude the social partners from such processes has been an important factor in the failure of policy-making and the relegation of social considerations to subordinate levels of priority, or worse.

Clearly, the Summit should strive to correct these shortcomings. Some government representatives speaking at the organizational session of the Summit Preparatory Committee referred specifically to the need to involve employers' and workers' organizations in the Summit, and the ICFTU would urge that serious and early attention be given to the concrete modalities of such participation.

The ILO has already called on Member States to include trade union and employer representatives in national delegations to the Summit, and the ICFTU will continue to make use of the opportunities offered by its category I consultative status with the Economic and Social Council to make the fullest possible input to it. Nevertheless, these avenues are not sufficient to guarantee the scale of tripartite participation that is needed to offer the best chance of a successful conclusion to the Summit. In this respect, the ICFTU is strongly of the view that specific provision should be made in the organization of the Summit for the active involvement of the social partners. To do otherwise would be to replicate at the Summit the obstacles to popular participation that have been so damaging to social development in many countries.

In this regard, the ICFTU very much welcomes the indications given to the effect that workers' and employers' experts will be invited to participate in the preparatory expert meeting on the core issue of employment to be convened by the Government of Sweden in October.

In addition to questions of procedure and representation, the ICFTU is, of course, concerned that the Summit should produce concrete and action-oriented results which can have a real substantial impact upon social development around the world. In this light, the Declaration and Plan of Action to be adopted by the Summit acquire primary importance. It is to be hoped that as the international community approaches the Summit, it will keep fully in mind the interdependence of the global economic system, which dictates that the promotion of social development in any specific part of the world is beneficial for development prospects in all others. This convergence of international solidarity and enlightened self-interest means that, given the appropriate spirit of cooperation and vision from all concerned, there is reason to be

optimistic that damaging conflicts of interest and perspective can be avoided in the Summit process and that important positive results can be obtained.

For its part, the ICFTU would welcome a major new commitment to international cooperation in the interests of social development emerging from the Summit. A global solidarity pact embodying a firm commitment to relaunch the social development process would be a fitting outcome to the Summit. Nevertheless, if such a pact is to be of more than symbolic value, that commitment would have to endure beyond the Summit itself and guide the actions of Governments and international institutions well into the future.

The ICFTU will be ready to present its views concerning the detailed contents of the Summit Declaration and Plan of Action at the appropriate time. However, it can already identify the processes of structural adjustment and transition in which many countries are now engaged as areas of priority concern. It has consistently emphasized the need for social considerations to be given their proper and central place in such processes and has had cause to regret that the international financial institutions involved in the design and implementation of adjustment programmes have generally failed to act upon that need. The Summit provides the opportunity for the type of reorientation required to rectify this shortcoming.

In its long and active involvement in the ILO, the ICFTU has played a major role in the setting and supervision of international labour standards. The conventions and recommendations adopted by the Organisation constitute a critically important body of international law whose application can, and should, provide the basic and universal ground rules of social and labour practice upon which a sustainable process of global social development must be based. They merit the detailed attention of the Summit.

In conclusion, the ICFTU welcomes the convening of the Summit, expresses the strongest wish to contribute to its success via appropriate avenues of tripartite participation, and urges all concerned to commit themselves to the achievement of a positive outcome which can bring real benefits to the many millions around the world who are today subject to gross social deprivation.



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WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE ROLE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM IN PROMOTING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Statement submitted by the International Council on Social
Welfare and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies,
non-governmental organizations in consultative status with
the Economic and Social Council, category I

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is
circulated in accordance with paragraphs 23 and 24 of Economic and Social
Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

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* See E/1993/100.

1. Both the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) 1/ and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) 2/ would like to affirm to the Economic and Social Council their wholehearted support for the upcoming World Summit for Social Development in 1995. Both organizations would like to stress their activity in accordance with the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes as stated by the United Nations, especially in promoting cooperation at all levels and in addressing the needs of different social groups.

2. In view of their interests and membership, both organizations have resolved that activities in relation to the Summit will be their major priority for 1993-1995. They would, therefore, like to assure the Economic and Social Council that they are prepared, through their members and partners, to contribute to the preparatory process at both the national and international levels.

3. ICSW and ICVA greatly welcome the opportunity which the Summit will provide for discussion of key issues relating to social integration, alleviation of poverty and expansion of productive employment. Both organizations will cooperate in forwarding the core issues of the Summit within a framework citing the need for:

Putting people first;

More cooperation, better social policies and better strategies for participation;

Global strategies to advance social well-being;

Economic development and social justice as a means to human development;

Establishing balanced interaction between State, market and social development;

Paying special attention to the problems of marginalized and disadvantaged groups;

Promoting progress on legal protection, social welfare, education, training and social security structures;

Mobilizing resources for social development and action within the United Nations system.

4. However, both ICSW and ICVA would like to stress that they take a very strong stand on the second point and would like to call for the eradication of poverty rather for its mere alleviation and reduction.

5. Both ICSW and ICVA will encourage their members to closely monitor and participate in national preparations for the Summit. They encourage strong representation of non-governmental organizations, in national delegations, in the belief that, especially in social affairs, the voluntary sector is often more involved and competent to speak on certain issues (such as service provision) than are other sectors. They feel input from non-governmental organizations to be vital for addressing the core Summit issues.

6. Therefore, ICSW and ICVA would like the Economic and Social Council to expressly urge the encouragement and facilitation of non-governmental involvement in the Summit process. This would include funds earmarked to ensure the involvement particularly of developing country non-governmental organizations in Summit-related activities.

7. In order to better involve and prepare non-governmental organizations for the World Summit, both ICSW and ICVA are organizing a broad range of activities in relation to it:

(a) The organizations' various newsletters and reports have already begun to disseminate information on the Summit to the non-governmental organization network;

(b) ICSW and ICVA will prepare briefing documents to orient non-governmental organizations regarding the core issues to be approached at the Summit and to aid in enhancing their involvement therein;

(c) Five regional meetings will be held prior to the Summit to enable non-governmental organizations in those regions to express and advocate their concerns regarding Summit input;

(d) The ICSW International Conference of Social Welfare in July 1994 will be on the theme of "Global Welfare 94: The Fight Against Poverty and Inequality on a World Level". It will serve as the ICSW preparatory meeting for the 1995 Summit, thus focusing the attention of ICSW members - an international social policy organization made up primarily of the voluntary sector - as a community seeking ways to better cooperate with other sectors in the common goal of fighting to eradicate poverty and inequality;

(e) Immediately following the above conference, an NGO Forum will be organized as a global non-governmental preparatory meeting for the Summit.

8. ICSW and ICVA take a very broad view of basic human rights to include political, civil, social, economic and cultural rights, seeing all of these as inextricably interdependent and indivisible.

9. Both ICSW and ICVA acknowledge that the social status assigned to certain identifiable groups excludes many people from the benefits of advances in social development. ICSW and ICVA campaign vigorously for the full recognition, avid defence and active promotion of basic human rights for everyone. It is their belief that social development is achievable only if poverty and marginality - along with their causes - are eradicated, equal access to resources guaranteed and cultural differences respected.

10. ICSW and ICVA acknowledge the validity and significance of the chosen core issues. They acknowledge their close interrelated nature: poverty leads to marginalization and vice versa, and the expansion of productive employment can be seen as the solution to both. A constructive and holistic approach to all three issues would go far in solving the major social problems ensuing from the negative consequences of being poor, alienated and cut off from constructive activity.

11. ICSW and ICVA would like to explicitly affirm their support for the United Nations General Assembly resolution that the Summit should express a "shared world-wide commitment to put the needs of people at the centre of development". They agree and promote the interface between human rights and development, and between national and international action, in the certainty that only positive consequences can ensue from constructive action in such directions.
12. Acknowledging the consequences occurring when population growth takes place under conditions of economic recession, ICSW and ICVA support sound social and economic policies to provide a secure "safety net" for people who fall victim to global swings. They wish to draw attention to the fact that this "safety net" has diminished in great measure during the last decade. Rather than leave people to passively suffer their fate, ICSW and ICVA support structures which empower them and which break down traditional dependencies.
13. In a broad economic context, ICSW and ICVA wish to draw attention to the vast income disparities in the world today, not only between nations (150:1) but also within nations: the gap between rich and poor has widened during the last decade. The two Councils support more equitable market systems which do not keep developing countries in a situation of economic bondage. In addition, they support development projects aimed at permanent correction of such inequities and in harmony with social-improvement schemes developed in keeping with the needs of the local community as they themselves see them.
14. ICSW and ICVA, in solidarity with their members from developing countries, wish to express their support for schemes aimed at correcting such forms of economic injustice or paternalistic development. They promote greater autonomy of developing countries in world markets and systems aimed at correcting global economic disparities and in promoting self-reliance, equitable distribution and proper utilization of resources - both human and material - to create a sound base for the socio-economic and personal development of the poor.
15. The two Councils would like to make special mention of all core topics as themes that have an overwhelming impact in relation to the advancement of women. Women constitute half the world's population and produce two thirds of its labour, but they hold only 1 per cent of its property and continue to suffer particular disadvantages. ICSW and ICVA believe that, in order for any social policy to be effective, there is a vital need to examine gender roles, constraints and responsibilities within any given society, and then to harmonize these realities with the chosen path of action.
16. Consequently, ICSW and ICVA call for greater efforts to integrate women more fully into society as fully-fledged members with equal and acknowledged rights and involvement in decision-making processes. Both Councils call for greater steps to be taken to eliminate gender-based poverty and deprivation (the so-called "feminization of poverty"), it being common knowledge that the weight of poverty falls disproportionately upon women and the children they bring up. More households headed by women are poor; and poverty in turn diminishes one's chances for effective social integration. Increasing impoverishment, homelessness and marginalization among women has created a definite need for action in this direction. Moreover, given the particular problems women face in the labour market and concerning work-related benefits, ICSW and ICVA call for

greater efforts to be made to recognize and remunerate the productive activities of women, be they in or outside the home.

17. Both ICSW and ICVA promote the idea that social development should become the main task of the United Nations at this point in history - the reason being that there can be no world peace and security as long as poverty grows unchecked; and with the increasing sense of marginalization and frustration which results from it, ICSW and ICVA see such phenomena as the main cause of political instability at all levels; and, conversely, they believe that stability will increase when the basic needs of all people within a society are met and when their rights are guaranteed and their satisfaction ensured: real social integration will prevent the proliferation of ethnic and racial tensions, as well as other disintegrative tendencies, such as substance abuse or violent behaviour. ICSW and ICVA strongly reiterate their support to any and all United Nations initiatives in this direction.

Notes

1/ ICSW is an autonomous global body representing non-governmental organizations involved in issues of social welfare, social justice and social development. Its relevance is based on its absolute commitment to the interests of all people of the world in ensuring their quality of life and in acting upon issues of urgency which endanger their well-being. ICSW members are united in their commitment to global social justice and its many member organizations act together to promote these interests through advocacy, exchange, dissemination of information and support for sectors involved in social concerns.

2/ ICVA, established in 1962 and based in Geneva, Switzerland, brings together major international, regional and national non-governmental organizations active in humanitarian assistance and sustainable development. ICVA members mobilize about \$2,500 million a year. ICVA's international members group more than 1,500 agencies in practically all countries of the world, while national umbrella members have an aggregate membership of over 2,500 institutions.



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POLICY DIALOGUE AND DISCUSSION ON IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE
WORLD ECONOMY AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH HEADS
OF MULTILATERAL FINANCIAL AND TRADE INSTITUTIONS OF THE
UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Statement submitted by the International Chamber of Commerce,
a non-governmental organization in consultative status with
the Economic and Social Council, category I

The Secretary-General has received the following statement which is
circulated in accordance with paragraphs 23 and 24 of Economic and Social
Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

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* E/1993/100.

The International Chamber of Commerce remains concerned that in 1993 the recovery of the world economy continues to be weak, fragile and uneven. Debt deflation as a legacy of the 1980s is proving a protracted process: It has unfortunately coincided with a massive increase in global investment needs to finance economic reform in eastern Europe, the former USSR and the development needs of many countries of the South, as well as to begin the process of cleaning up the world's environment.

There are, however, several encouraging developments: the continuing recovery in North America; the enduring buoyancy of many developing countries; positive signs that reforms in some eastern European economies are beginning to bear fruit; and significant reductions in inflation in a large number of countries. In addition, real interest rates have been falling steadily in Europe in the first half of 1993; in Japan, a second large fiscal stimulus package announced in April should -- allied to low interest rates -- boost domestic demand and contribute to lowering the country's large trade surplus; and the new U.S. Administration is trying to make progress towards reducing the large federal budget deficit.

Close policy co-ordination, at least among the major economies, is vital if an interdependent world economy is to function well. Increasingly, a global approach is necessary to tackle major problems like poverty, the environment, unemployment, structural adjustment, debt, and emigration.

To take but one of these problems, the ICC is deeply concerned by the high level of unemployment in the world economy which, throughout successive business cycles, has been on a sharply upward trend since the mid-1970s and which in recent years has become a major cause of protectionist sentiment. Though statistics for the developing countries are patchy and unreliable, it is patently clear that the combination of rapid population growth and poor economic performance during the 1980s across most of the poorer regions of the globe has created a huge and deepseated problem.

In parallel, the OECD has projected that unemployment in the industrialized countries will reach nearly 36 million by the end of this year. And within the industrialized world, it is in the European Community that high structural unemployment is at its most chronic -- exacerbated at the present time by high interest rates, weak confidence, exchange rate turbulence, and uncertainties about the Maastricht Treaty, all of which are retarding economic recovery.

We believe that the following factors militate against job creation and must be tackled on a broad front:

- **high interest rates** associated with high public sector budget deficits;
- **excessive regulation** and taxation of business activity, and especially small business creation;

- **rigid labour laws** and practices which inhibit a variety of forms of employment contract and which afford employees excessive protection against dismissal;
- **the distortion of pay differentials** by inflexible and unrealistic statutory minimum wages;
- **high non-wage labour costs** imposed on companies by fiscal and social security laws;
- **ill-designed social security systems** which demotivate and discourage unemployed people from re-entering the work force;
- **inadequate investment** in education, training and life-long re-training to meet the continuously evolving skill requirements of modern economies; and
- **housing policies** which inhibit geographic mobility.

More generally, a collective international medium-term strategy for growth and employment in 1994 and beyond is required. The strategy should, *inter alia*, look to:

- agreement on a far-reaching market access package covering manufactured goods, agriculture and services within the context of the Uruguay Round, with the firm aim of successfully concluding the Round before the end of this year on the basis of the Draft Final Act submitted by the GATT's Director General in December 1991;
- improved market access for the exports of developing countries and economies in transition to help them pay their way in the world and to encourage them to persevere with painful and politically sensitive reforms;
- reining back the apparently inexorable rise in structural government budget deficits, and improving the productivity and cost-effectiveness of the public sector;
- complementing sound macro-economic policies with "supply side" reforms which improve the functioning of product, labour and financial markets;
- improving co-ordination of the wide variety of bilateral and multilateral assistance being extended to eastern Europe and the republics of the former USSR;
- working closely with business to evolve cost-effective and market-based policies and techniques to achieve environmental goals, recognizing that flexibility is essential in a rapidly-changing commercial and technological climate, and in view of the uncertain scientific data about many of the world's environmental problems.

In its latest **World Economic Outlook**, the IMF observed that the medium-term economic prospects of the developing countries appear brighter than for decades. After growing by an

average 6 percent last year, the economies of the developing world are projected by the Fund to expand by 5 per cent in 1993 and 1994, accelerating to an average of almost 6 per cent in 1995-1998. Certainly, these averages mask a widely diverging performance between countries and regions, with Asia setting the pace and Africa trailing behind. But, in an encouraging note, the IMF foresees an increasing convergence of growth rates in the years ahead across the developing world -- with Africa also showing steady progress -- as more and more countries implement market-oriented economic reforms and the debt problem recedes.

The continued success of economic reforms in the developing world depends in large part, however, on a favorable external environment. A principal factor will naturally be the pace of economic recovery in the industrialized countries. But equally vital will be the determination of the latter to help meet the growing investment needs of the developing world and to improve market access for the exports of poorer countries.

Market access -- and particularly for products in which they have a comparative advantage -- is essential to enable developing countries to meet their debt obligations and to demonstrate to domestic constituencies that the abandonment of long-standing import policies is positively recognized by the industrialized countries.

There are signs that the recession has bottomed out in eastern Europe, and in some cases of the beginnings of recovery. Among countries reaping the rewards of courageous structural reform are the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, where economic output is beginning to revive and inflation has eased. However, apart from financial aid, the countries of eastern and central Europe need above all to realize their export potential. Though rapid surges in low-cost imports can create disruption, it is essential that the industrialized countries maintain open access to their markets for goods in which the economies in transition have a comparative advantage.

The economic picture is more somber in Russia and most other former Soviet republics. Russia is by far the largest economy to attempt the transfer to a market economy system. The sheer scale of the problems it faces makes solutions much harder than elsewhere. Nevertheless, significant progress has been made in the space of two years.

Business, therefore, welcomes the financial aid programs put in place by the IMF and other international lending institutions and the recent decisions of G7 countries to increase multilateral and bilateral support to the Russian Federation. It urges that lending policy be focused to help the peoples of the former communist nations help themselves. Aid, too, should be carefully targeted so that it reaches sectors where it can do most good and is most urgently needed -- examples are the improvement of food storage and food processing facilities. The ICC also believes that the republics of the former Soviet Union could all benefit from a greater common effort to re-establish trading relationships among themselves.

Political stability, an improved communications infrastructure, and a secure body of modern commercial law are vital to accelerate the build-up of foreign investment in Russia and the NIS - just as they are vital to encourage the growth of domestic private-sector business. To this end,

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the ICC has sent legal and trade experts to Moscow and other capitals to advise governmental authorities on the training of appropriate legislation. In addition, in co-operation with the growing number of business organizations within the former USSR which have obtained or are seeking ICC membership, we are carrying out technical assistance training programmes in such areas as commercial arbitration, environmental management, trade techniques, marketing, and the running of chambers of commerce.

In sum, while there are hopeful signs, both with respect to economic activity and policy direction, the world economy continues to face formidable problems which must be addressed if recovery is to develop the necessary scope, depth and strength.
